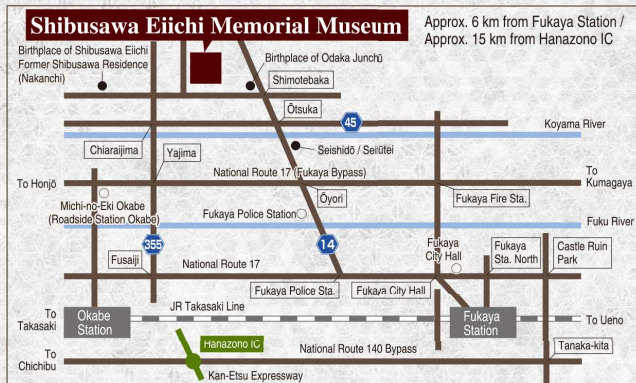


Chronological Table of Shibusawa Eiichi

Year (AD)	Age	Major Events	Notes
1840	0	Born in Chiarajima Village, Hanzawa District, Musashi Province (present-day Fukaya City), as the son of Ichirōemon and Ei, a farming family.	Opium War
1858	18	Married Chiyo, the younger sister of Odaka Junchū.	
1863	23	Planned the seizure of Takasaki Castle and the burning of foreign trading houses in Yokohama; the plan was abandoned following the persuasion of Odaka Chōshichirō (younger brother of Junchū), and he departed for Kyoto.	Opening of the world's first subway
1864	24	Entered the service of the Hitotsubashi family together with Shibusawa Kisaku, through the introduction of Hiraoka Enshirō, a chief aide to the Hitotsubashi family.	
1867	27	Accompanied Tokugawa Akitake, younger brother of Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu, as a member of the delegation to the Paris World Exposition in France.	Restoration of Imperial Rule (Taisei Hōkan)
1868	28	Returned from France; subsequently served the Shizuoka Domain for a time and established the Shōhō Kaisha, a joint-stock-style commercial organization.	Adoption of the Meiji era name
1869	29	Entered service under the Meiji government and was appointed a senior official in charge of taxation; later concurrently served as Head of the Law Revision Office.	Return of lands and people to the Emperor (Hanseki Hōkan)
1870	30	Appointed to oversee the establishment of the government-operated Tomioka Silk Mill.	
1873	33	Resigned from his post as Senior Official of the Ministry of Finance (Okura Daijū). Subsequently became Director-General of the Daiichi National Bank (Daiichi Kokuritsu Ginkō).	Land Tax Reform
1874	34	Took charge of the administration of the Yōkuin, an institution for the care of the orphaned children and the elderly without family support.	Taiwan Expedition
1882	42	His wife, Chiyo, passed away.	Opening of the Bank of Japan
1883	43	Married Itō Kaneko.	
1885	45	Made efforts to ensure the continuation of the Yōkuin following the Tokyo Prefectural decision to abolish its direct management.	Itō Hirobumi became Japan's first Prime Minister
1888	48	Established a factory of the Japan Brick Manufacturing Company in Jōshikimen Village (present-day Fukaya City).	
1900	60	Was granted the title of Baron.	
1901	61	The Japan Women's University was founded; he assumed the role of Accounting Supervisor.	
1902	62	Visited the United States and various European countries together with his wife Kaneko, working to promote international goodwill.	Anglo-Japanese Alliance
1909	69	Traveled to the United States as head of a Japanese business delegation.	
1914	74	Visited China following the establishment of the Sino-Japanese Industrial Company, working to foster goodwill.	World War I
1916	76	Retired from the business world and devoted himself to social welfare activities. Donated a worship hall to Chiarajima Suwa Shrine.	
1920	80	Was granted the title of Viscount.	Establishment of the League of Nations
1921	81	Traveled to the United States to observe the Washington Naval Conference, promoting peaceful diplomacy.	
1923	83	Following the Great Kantō Earthquake, served as Vice Chairman of the Earthquake Relief Association and contributed to reconstruction efforts.	
1927	87	As President of the Japan Society for International Children's Friendship, promoted the exchange of dolls between Japan and the United States.	Opening of Japan's first subway
1929	89	Was granted the honor of a private audience with the Emperor and attended an exclusive imperial luncheon.	The Great Depression
1931	91	Passed away on November 11.	Manchurian Incident
2021		The NHK Taiga drama Reach Beyond the Blue Sky (Setten wo Tsuke) was broadcast, featuring Shibusawa Eiichi as its protagonist.	
2024		A 10,000-yen banknote featuring the portrait of Shibusawa Eiichi was issued.	



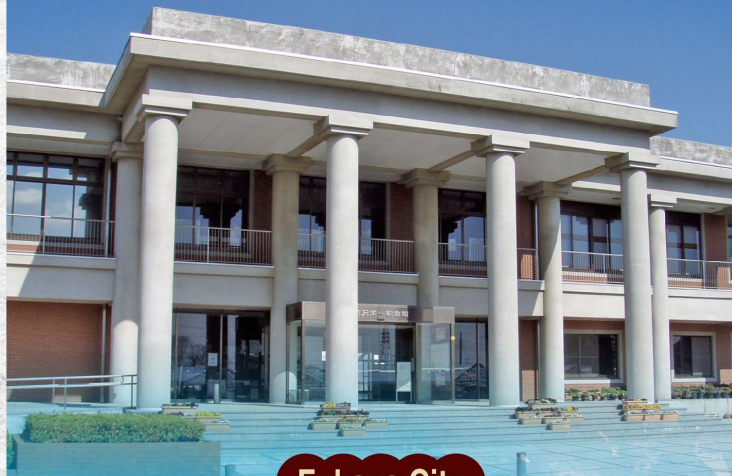
Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Museum

1204 Shimotobaka,
Fukaya City, Saitama, Japan
Phone: +81-48-587-1100



※ For tour reservations, opening days, and other details, please check the latest information on the website.
Fukaya City Official Website: "Shibusawa Eiichi Digital Museum"

2026.2



Fukaya City

Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Museum

Opened on November 11, 1995—the anniversary of Shibusawa Eiichi's passing—this memorial museum is operated by Fukaya City, Saitama Prefecture, and is dedicated to honoring the life and achievements of Shibusawa Eiichi.

Visitor Information

Shibusawa Eiichi Archives Room

This area features a permanent exhibition that introduces the life of Shibusawa Eiichi through photographs, manuscripts, and other historical materials, as well as a special exhibition space that explores various aspects of his life and achievements in greater depth, drawing on items from the museum's collection.

Lecture Room

In this room, visitors can attend lectures delivered by the Shibusawa Eiichi Android, which faithfully recreates his appearance in his seventies. Through these lectures, visitors are introduced to key concepts such as the Unity of Morality and Economy, a central principle of Shibusawa Eiichi's philosophy.

Shibusawa Eiichi Android

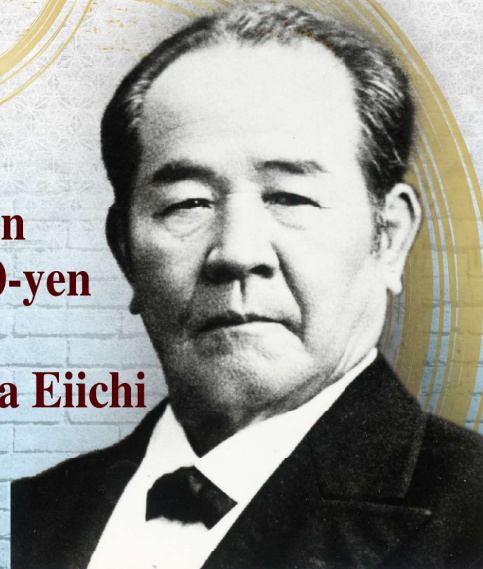
This android was created with funding provided by Toriba Hiromichi, a native of Fukaya City and Honorary Chairman of Doutor Coffee, and was produced under the technical supervision of Ishiguro Hiroshi, Professor at the Graduate School of Osaka University. Through the words spoken by the android, visitors can experience and reflect on the ideas and philosophy of Shibusawa Eiichi as they were in his lifetime, brought vividly into the present day.

Father of
Modern Japanese Economics

Shibusawa Eiichi



Portrait on the 10,000-yen Banknote Shibusawa Eiichi



Shibusawa Eiichi (pen name Seien) was born in 1840 (Tenpō 11) into a farming family in Chiarajima, present-day Fukaya City. Through helping with the family business, he learned diligence and consideration for others from his father, Ichirōemon, while being raised with deep compassion and affection by his mother, Ei.

He studied the Analects and other subjects under the guidance of his cousin Odaka Junchū (pen name Rankō), and was also influenced by the sonnō jōi movement advocating reverence for the Emperor and the expulsion of foreign powers. Around the age of twenty-three, troubled by the contradictions of the Tokugawa shogunate system, he became involved in a plan to raise an armed force. When the plan was abandoned, he left his hometown. He later entered the service of the Hitotsubashi family and the shogunate, and in 1867 (Keiō 3) accompanied a delegation to the Paris World Exposition. There, he encountered Europe's advanced social institutions, ideas, and culture firsthand—an experience that would have a profound influence on his later life.

After entering government service under the Meiji government in 1869 (Meiji 2), Shibusawa devoted himself to establishing the institutional foundations necessary for Japan's modernization. In 1873 (Meiji 6), he resigned from public office and founded the Daiichi National Bank (Daiichi Kokuritsu Ginkō), Japan's first modern bank. Thereafter, he was involved in the establishment and development of approximately 500 companies, fostering a wide range of industries essential to Japan's economic growth. In addition to his business activities, he also contributed to around 600 social welfare, public service, and educational initiatives, and continued to promote international goodwill until his death in 1931 (Shōwa 6).

Fukaya City, Saitama Prefecture

The Starting Point of an Entrepreneur

In addition to farming and sericulture, Shibusawa Eiichi's family also produced aidama—indigo dye cakes made from indigo leaves. The leaves were purchased from local growers and processed into aidama, which served as the raw material for indigo dyeing. Eiichi's father, Ichirōemon, was highly skilled in evaluating the quality of indigo leaves. Eiichi accompanied his father on purchasing trips and visits to customers, gaining practical experience from an early age. At the age of fourteen, he even went alone to procure indigo leaves on behalf of his busy father. Although the farmers initially dismissed the young Eiichi, they were soon impressed by his keen eye, as he accurately pointed out details such as insufficient fertilization or inadequate drying. As a result, Eiichi succeeded in acquiring high-quality indigo leaves—an early sign of his business acumen.



Birthplace of Shibusawa Eiichi / Former Shibusawa Residence (Nakanchi)
(The existing main house was rebuilt in 1895, during the Meiji period, by Eiichi's sister and her husband.)

From Opposition to the Shogunate to Service as a Retainer

During the Edo period, it was not uncommon for feudal lords to compel wealthy subjects to provide financial contributions known as *goyōkin*. When Eiichi was seventeen, the Shibusawa family—prosperous farmers at the time—was ordered by the Okabe Domain to provide 500 *ryō* as such a contribution. Acting on behalf of his father, Eiichi appeared at the magistrate's office and explained that, as a representative, he would need to return home and consult with his father before giving an answer. The magistrate, however, demanded an immediate decision and berated him. Deeply offended by the official's arrogance, Eiichi became indignant, later reflecting that the arrogance of the samurai stemmed from the failures of shogunal governance and that the class system itself was fundamentally flawed. This growing resentment toward the existing order would eventually drive Eiichi toward efforts to overthrow the shogunate.

In 1863 (Bun'kyū 3), at the age of twenty-three, Eiichi joined with his cousin Odaka Junchū, a scholar from a neighboring village who was ten years his senior, along with Junchū's younger brother Chōshichirō and another cousin, Shibusawa Kisaku, to devise a plan to seize Takasaki Castle and set fire to foreign trading houses in Yokohama. However, after observing the political situation in Kyoto, Chōshichirō opposed the plan, and it was ultimately abandoned. To avoid suspicion from the shogunate and to assess the state of affairs for themselves, Eiichi and Kisaku set out for Kyoto.

In 1864 (Genji 1), acting on the advice of Hiraoka Enshirō, a trusted chief aide to the Hitotsubashi family, Eiichi entered the service of Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu (later the fifteenth shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu). There, he began to distinguish himself by working on financial reforms, including the recruitment of farmer-soldiers and the management of new enterprises.

Experiences in Europe

In 1867 (Keiō 3), Eiichi accompanied the delegation led by Tokugawa Akitake, younger brother of Tokugawa Yoshinobu, who attended the Paris World Exposition as the shogun's representative. Eiichi traveled to Europe as an officer responsible for general affairs and accounting, an experience that would later prove pivotal in shaping his outlook.

Curious by nature, Eiichi cut off his traditional topknot, adopted Western attire, and toured a wide range of institutions, including parliaments, exchanges, banks, companies, factories, hospitals, and water and sewage systems. He was astonished by the advanced state of European civilization and was deeply impressed by the principle of human equality.

The knowledge and experiences Eiichi gained during his approximately one-and-a-half-year stay in Europe had a profound influence on the course of his later life.

※Photo source: Shibusawa Eiichi Biographical Materials, Supplementary Volume 10, "Shibusawa Eiichi Photographs."



※Shibusawa Eiichi in Western attire

From Government Service to the Business World

After returning to Japan in 1868 (Meiji 1), Eiichi traveled to Shizuoka, where Tokugawa Yoshinobu was living in seclusion, and established the Shōhō Kaisha, a joint-stock-style organization, to promote regional economic development. The following year, persuaded by senior government official Ōkuma Shigenobu, he entered service under the Meiji government as a senior official in charge of taxation. In this role, he was involved in the planning and formulation of a wide range of systems essential to modernization, including weights and measures, the calendar, railways, postal services, and public finance. However, as he came to recognize the limitations of the rigid bureaucratic structure, and concluded that the growth of private industry was indispensable to enriching society, Eiichi resigned from the Ministry of Finance in 1873 (Meiji 6) and turned to the business world. Beginning with the founding of the Daiichi National Bank (Daiichi Kokuritsu Ginkō), he went on to participate in the establishment and development of approximately 500 companies, devoting himself to fostering a broad range of industries.

Throughout his life, Eiichi's guiding principle was rooted in the spirit of the Analects. Rather than pursuing profit alone, he sought to align economic activity with morality as expressed in the Analects, an approach known as the Unity of Morality and Economy. Based on this philosophy, he aimed to advance Japan's economy through the promotion of the public good. It is in this commitment that the true greatness of Eiichi—often hailed as the "Father of Modern Japanese Economics"—can be found.



※Daiichi Kokuritsu Ginkō

Compassion and Social Welfare Activities

Eiichi was deeply committed to social welfare throughout his life. In 1874 (Meiji 7), at the request of the Tokyo Prefectural Government, he became involved with the Yōikuin, an institution established to care for orphaned children and the elderly without family support. From that time onward, he served as its director for more than fifty years, continuing in this role until his death at the age of ninety-one. He also devoted considerable effort to the establishment and operation of child welfare institutions such as the Saitama Childcare Institute and Takinogawa Gakuen, and played a role in the enactment of the Relief Law, which laid the groundwork for public assistance in Japan. It is said that Eiichi's strong sense of compassion was influenced by his mother, who was known for caring personally for sick neighbors, even providing them with clothing and meals.

He also placed great emphasis on education, contributing to the management of the Commercial Training School (now Hitotsubashi University) and serving as a founding committee member—later becoming principal—of Japan Women's University.

Eiichi was equally passionate about the development of medical and healthcare institutions. He was involved in the establishment and operation of organizations such as The Jikei University Hospital (formerly Tokyo Jikei Hospital), Saiseikai, St. Luke's International Hospital, and the Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association.



※With Prince Takamatsu, during a visit to the Sugamo Branch of the Yōikuin

Promoting International Friendship

Deeply concerned about the deterioration of relations between Japan and the United States, Eiichi received a proposal from the American educator Sidney Lewis Gulick to promote friendship between the two countries through an exchange of dolls. In response, Eiichi encouraged cooperation from the Japanese government and organized the Japan Society for International Children's Friendship.

In 1927 (Shōwa 2), approximately 13,000 "Blue-Eyed Dolls" were sent from the United States to Japan. These dolls were distributed to elementary schools across the country, where they were warmly welcomed. As a gesture of reciprocity, 58 Japanese dolls were later sent to the United States. Today, twelve Blue-Eyed Dolls are preserved at elementary schools and other institutions within Saitama Prefecture, with more than 300 remaining nationwide.

Eiichi also maintained friendships with prominent figures from around the world, including Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th President of the United States; Thomas Edison; William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army; Sun Yat-sen of China; and the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore.



※Shibusawa Eiichi holding a Blue-Eyed Doll

Shibusawa Eiichi and the Tomioka Silk Mill

As part of its policy to promote industry, the Meiji government planned in 1870 (Meiji 3) the construction of a model Western-style silk-reeling factory to earn foreign currency through trade. Under the leadership of Shibusawa Eiichi and others, with Odaka Junchū appointed as the on-site manager, construction proceeded in what is now Tomioka City, Gunma Prefecture. The Tomioka Silk Mill opened in 1872 (Meiji 5), with Junchū serving as its first director. In 2014, the Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Color woodblock print: "View of the Tomioka Silk Mill in Jōshū"
(Collection of the Tomioka City Museum / Fukuzawa Ichirō Memorial Museum)

Origin of the Pen Name "Seien"

Eiichi, who also enjoyed calligraphy as a personal pursuit, left behind many works bearing the signature "Seien," his pen name. This name was inspired by a deep pool of clear, blue-green water known as Kami-no-Fuchi, located near Nakanchi, the house where Eiichi was born. The name "Seien" was bestowed upon him by his cousin Odaka Junchū, reflecting the serene waters that symbolized Eiichi's place of origin.

Shibusawa Eiichi, Brickmaking, and Fukaya City

In 1887 (Meiji 20), Eiichi founded Nihon Renga Seizo Company (Japan Brick Manufacturing Co.). The following year, a factory was established in Jōshikimen, present-day Fukaya City. Bricks produced there were used in buildings that came to symbolize Japan's modernization, including the Bank of Japan, the Ministry of Justice (the former Main Building with its red-brick structure), and Tokyo Station. Owing to this connection, the JR Fukaya Station building was designed in imitation of Tokyo Station. Bricks manufactured by Nihon Renga were also used in Seishidō, a nationally designated Important Cultural Property built to celebrate Eiichi's seventy-seventh birthday.



JR Fukaya Station

Seishidō

Nibōtō

Nibōtō is a traditional local dish of Fukaya, consisting of flat wheat noodles simmered in a soy sauce-based broth with generous amounts of vegetables such as green onions, daikon radish, and carrots. Eiichi himself is said to have enjoyed this dish whenever he returned to his hometown.

In 2023, Nibōtō was officially recognized as one of Japan's "100-Year Foods" by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

