

ANNA VARDANYAN, Ph.D.
Armenian State University of Economics, Lecturer
YSU, International Relations and Diplomacy, M.A.
Founding President of “Arumenia-Nippon”
Armenian-Japanese Scientific & Cultural Union NGO
E-mail: vannarmenia@gmail.com

VICKEN BABKENIAN, Independent researcher
Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies
E-mail: vbab124@gmail.com
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THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GREAT JAPANESE ARMENOPHILE EIICHI SHIBUSAWA

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Nowadays, the interest in the image of Eiichi Shibusawa (1840-1931), as a unique, exemplary entrepreneur does not stop in Japan. He founded more than 500 business enterprises operating in Japan, carried out diplomatic and charitable activities, and made a major contribution to the development of the Japanese economy at the time. Shibusawa's name is less known to the Armenian public. With this article, we want to make the name of Eiichi Shibusawa known to the Armenian people, for his pro-Armenian activities during the years of the Armenian Genocide, and after that. In the current year, a film series about the life and activities of Eiichi Shibusawa is shown on Japanese national television, which includes episodes about Shibusawa's pro-Armenian

activities during the Armenian Genocide.¹ Our article is aimed at emphasizing his philanthropic activity and the trajectory of friendship between the Armenian-Japanese peoples, the manifestation of Shibusawa's pro-Armenian approach on historical bonds.

Historical Review on the Humanitarian Assistance by the Japanese

According to Makiko Watanabe, formerly of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan's humanitarian assistance dates back to 1953, when the government started funding UN relief work for Palestinian refugees. Later in the 1970's, Japan dispatched a small medical team to help Cambodian refugees. In 1987, this ad hoc help was formalized with the adoption of the Japan Disaster Relief Team Law (JDR Law) which officially enshrined the commitment by Japan to international relief.²

The early history of Japan's international humanitarian relief involvement has not been the subject of any major study. Consequently, Japan's participation in global humanitarian relief before 1953 is little known, and has failed to gain adequate recognition in the context of Japanese philanthropic history. Japan's first-known involvement in international humanitarian relief was not in 1953, but in 1922 in response to the Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman state.³

¹ "Eiichi Shibusawa is a National Benefactor: An Unknown History of the Support to Armenian Refugees", NHK, 06.10.2021, <https://bit.ly/3PEL1IO>, (Japanese: 「渋沢栄一は国の恩人」 アルメニア難民支えた知られざる歴史).

² Babkenian V., *Japan and the Armenian Genocide, A Forgotten International Humanitarian Relief Episode*, The Armenian Weekly, 19.09.2010, <https://bit.ly/3MFkURx>

³ Ibid.

According to our research, it becomes clear that the chronological wheel can be traced back for about two decades, thanks to the following testimony by Heggine Melik-Haykazyan in her travelogue “A stroll in Japan”, chapter "Kyoto Night"⁴. Heggine had a conversation with a wealthy Japanese person who invited her to his house to watch a festival from the second floor:

First, he expressed his gratitude for the honor to welcome me at his place, secondly, he asked my nationality and when he learnt that I am Armenian, he directed his deeply surprised look and asked me with suspicion:

- Are you one of those Armenians, who constantly struggle against Turks?

It was my turn to be surprised now.

- Oh, so you have heard about Armenians?

- Of course, I did. If I am not mistaken, there were massacres several years ago. There was a missionary here, who was collecting money to send it over to you. How are things going in your country now?

I was looking at his face and did not know what to answer. Shall I rejoice or grieve that the big wave of our pain had reached all the way to the Japanese islands.

“*One of the Armenians who constantly struggle against Turks*”: this type of a response by the Japanese person once again states that Armenian-Japanese relations have even deeper roots, which brings both admiration and astonishment. It turns out that the Japanese witnessed the real trauma of the Armenians connected with the Turks.

The Japanese have never been indifferent during the difficult days of the history of the Armenian people. The manifestations of mutual

⁴ Vardanyan A., *Heggine Melik-Haykazyan. A Stroll in Japan, Tbilisi, 1905, p. 192*, Review, Scientific Artsakh, №2(9), 2021, pp. 273-276, <https://artsakhlib.am/2021/09/28/english-heggine-melik-haykazyan-a-stroll-in-japan-tbilisi-1905-p-192/>

aid and humanitarianism have been a solid basis for the close Armenian-Japanese bilateral ties. One such episode was the fact of the rescue of local Armenians by the Japanese ship "Tokei Maru" in Smyrna, 1922, which has been preserved in the grateful memories among the descendants of the survivors, as mentioned in the congratulatory message sent by the former Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Tigran Avinyan on the occasion of the National Holiday of Japan on February 23, 2021, the birthday of the Emperor of Japan.⁵

Historical evidence shows that during the 1922 Smyrna massacre, the crew of the Japanese Tokei Maru merchant ship, witnessing local Christians fleeing and jumping into the sea, did not obey the orders of Mustafa Kemal's troops to leave the port. Moreover, the captain of the Japanese ship took courage, let the Armenians and Greeks who had escaped the genocide on the deck of the ship, and took them to the Greek shores.⁶

The Armenian Genocide was comprehensively studied by the Japanese expert of international law Hiroyoshi Segawa, who tells why he studied the subject of the Armenian Genocide and under what conditions. "After graduating from the doctoral program, the topic of "Genocide preconditions" was in the center of my interest for a long time. In order for these researches to reach their goal, I needed to bring concrete facts. That was about 20 years ago. At that time, I was studying materials related to the genocides in the UN archives, and suddenly I came across a material with this headline: "1915: The Armenian Genocide". Motivated by a sense of responsibility to humanity, I decided to take on the responsibility of opening the eyes of

⁵ *Address by Tigran Avinyan on the Occasion of the National Day of Japan - The Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan*, Official Website of the Government of RA, 23.02.2021, <https://www.gov.am/en/news/item/9880/>

⁶ Stavridis S. T., *The Japanese at Smyrna: September 1922*, AHIF Policy Journal, Sporting 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295906512_AHIF_Policy_Journal

the Japanese unaware of the tragedy experienced by the Armenians, "it was a very long, not smooth road".⁷ Hiroyoshi Segawa then published his book on this theme: "The Forgotten Genocide of the Armenians".⁸

Another researcher, Armenologist Hideharu Nakajima*, co-authored a book called "The Armenian Genocide: The history and Culture of the Armenian people" with his wife, Melanya Baghdasaryan.⁹

The mercy of the Japanese people towards the Armenians was manifested by the donations made by the Japanese to help the Armenians who survived the genocide.

Back in 1915, sparked by the cablegram sent by the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau in 1915, the international community responded to the atrocities committed against the Armenian people.¹⁰

Morgenthau considered it imperative to set up a special committee to find funds to help the refugees who had survived the massacres. Since October the 1st of 1915 Armenian Relief Committee started contributing to this project.¹¹ There were two more committees operating in the Near East: Syrian and Palestinian Relief Committee

⁷ Հովհաննիսյան Ն., Ամիրխանյան Մ., Կարապետյան Ռ., *Հայաստան-Ճապոնիա. Քաղաքական, տնտեսական, մշակութային և գիտական հարաբերություններ*, Երևան, 2005, էջ 156-162.

⁸ Սեգավա Հ., *Հայերի մոռացված ցեղասպանությունը: Հետազոտություն ցեղասպանության հանցագործությունը կանխարգելելու և պատժելու վերաբերյալ*, Երևան, 2005, 128 էջ:

* Hideharu Nakajima is an Armenologist, author of many books covering Armenia, head of Armenia-Japan Friendship Association, chief editor of Japanese "Ararat" and "Arax" magazines.

⁹ Բախչիյան Ա., *Հայ-ճապոնական պատմական և մշակութային առնչությունները*, Երևան, 2018, էջ 125-127:

¹⁰ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally, Part One, ...*, op. cit.

¹¹ *The Story of the Near East Relief*, The Armenian Genocide museum-institute foundation website, http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/online_exhibition_10.php

and Persian War Relief Foundation. In November, 1915, these two committees united with the Armenian Relief Committee functioning as Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee, later known as the American Committee for Relief in the Near East. On August 6, 1919, the U.S. Congress issued a Charter signed by the U.S. President incorporating the Near East Relief (N.E.R.).¹²

Since its establishment, the Committee has made an undeniable contribution to the salvation of Armenians orphaned by the Genocide. By 1929, the organization had raised over \$110 million (about \$1.4 billion in today's terms) and saved more than half a million Armenians from certain death. This figure included over 130,000 children who were housed, fed, and educated in more than 200 orphanages across the region. It was an unsurpassed achievement, remarkable even by today's standards, accomplished through the pioneering of philanthropic techniques which continue to be used today.¹³

Eiichi Shibusawa as the head of Japan's Armenian Relief Fund

In an effort to internationalize the N.E.R., the Reverend Dr. Lincoln L. Wirt, an American Congregational minister and a Red Cross commissioner during World War I, was given the mission to establish branches of the N.E.R. among the Pacific nations. After successfully establishing a relief committee in Hawaii, he arrived in Japan in February.¹⁴

As an American Christian missionary, Wirt considered it expedient to apply first to the American and European communities in Japan for donations.

¹² *United States Congress Act to Incorporate Near East Relief*, 06.08.1919, Armenian National Institute, <https://bit.ly/35MwFom>

¹³ Babkenian V., *Japan and the Armenian Genocide, A Forgotten International Humanitarian Relief Episode*, The Armenian Weekly, 19.09.2010, <https://bit.ly/3MFkURx>

¹⁴ Ibid.

He succeeded in establishing a general committee,¹⁵ composed of American businessmen and missionaries, with the American Ambassador, Charles Beecher Warren, as chairman. The Armenian relief movement began to gain momentum and at foreign social groups, lodges, clubs, churches, and garden parties, Wirt was invited to speak.¹⁶

Contemporary to Wirt's departure to Japan, the Washington Conference was held with the purpose of limiting naval arms and increasing security agreements in the Pacific area.¹⁷ This conference was the first international conference held in the United States and the first arms control conference in history. Advising the Japanese delegation at the conference was Viscount Eiichi Shibusawa.¹⁸

Born in what is now Fukaya, Japan in 1840, Visc. Shibusawa developed an eye for business early in life, helping with his family's farm and indigo business.¹⁹ He studied history and Confucian philosophy before traveling to Tokyo in his early twenties to further his studies. At the age of 27, he visited France and other European countries as a member of the Japanese delegation to the Paris World Exposition in 1867.²⁰

It was during this time that Visc. Shibusawa developed his opinions on the importance of industrial and economic development. Inspired by what he learned abroad, he founded one of Japan's first joint-stock companies. Later invited by the Japanese government to

¹⁵ National Archives of Armenia, Fund 430, List 1, Case 1285, p. 11.

¹⁶ Babkenian V., *Japan and the Armenian Genocide*, ..., op. cit.

¹⁷ *Washington Conference 1921–1922*, Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Washington-Conference-1921-1922>

¹⁸ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally, Part One...*, op. cit.

¹⁹ *In 1925 the Title of Viscount was Granted to Shibusawa* (子爵 shishaku), <https://www.shibusawa.or.jp/english/museum/about.html>

²⁰ Ibid.

become a member of the ministry of finance, he was a driving force in Japan's modernization in the late 1800s and early 1900s.²¹

A pioneering figure, Visc. Shibusawa encouraged growth and development across the industrial sector. He founded fisheries, railways, printing companies, steamship companies, steel plants, gas and electric industries, oil mines and many more. Applying a set of ideas and morals of what he called the 'unity of morality and economy', he attempted to merge Confucian ethics with the emerging market capitalism in Japan. He believed that capitalists should place a strong emphasis on righteousness and benevolence, placing the public interest first and foremost while still engaging in competition. Using this doctrine, he was involved in some 600 social welfare organizations.²²

It is appropriate to quote Shibusawa in this context: "I should realize that I owe the society for being rich, and should contribute to social relief, and public undertakings actively, then the society is becoming more and more healthy. And at the same time, the asset management of mine would become more and more secure".²³

Acting as an important bridge between the United States and Japan, Visc. Shibusawa returned home from the Washington Conference shortly before Rev. Wirt arrived in Japan.²⁴

While Wirt's mission was successful in Japan, another American missionary, Gilbert Bowles, reported that a group of leading local businessmen were interested in Wirt's mission. Bowles was respected by the Japanese and was fluent in Japanese. Accompanied by Bowles, Wirt was invited to the Imperial Bank. Shibusawa was also present at this meeting.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Koichi Tsuchida, interview in Armenia (Transcript of Eiichi Shibusawa Memorial Foundation Archives).

²⁴ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally, ...*, op. cit.

As Vicken Babkenian mentions in his article, he learned about the details of this meeting from an account recorded by Wirt himself. Acting as an interpreter, Bowles introduced Wirt to a number of personages including Viscount Shibusawa, a leading banker and vice-minister for foreign affairs. Sitting at the head of a long table, Shibusawa asked Wirt “who the Armenians were and why they needed help.” After a little geography and history, Wirt described the details of the atrocities committed against the Armenians and their current plight. Shibusawa interrupted and asked, “Why did you not come to us with your appeal?” He added, “Was it because we are Buddhists and you thought we would not help Christians in distress? We have read your speeches as reported in the Japan Advertiser [an English-language daily] and we thought we would like to help, even if we have not been invited to do so. Unknown to you, one of our Japanese papers published your appeal, and here is your result.” Shibusawa handed over to Wirt a check for \$11,000 (about \$140,000 in today’s terms).²⁵

Shibusawa accepted the chairmanship of the Armenian Relief Committee of Japan, headquartered in Kajimachi, Tokyo. He immediately wrote a letter to 100 Japanese leaders, inviting them to attend a lecture by Rev. Wirt in the hope of inspiring interest to help the Armenians.²⁶

In this regard, the issue of the Japanese Ryumon magazine of March 1922 is noteworthy, which states: “Three members including Mr. Shibusawa agreed that they would go forward in the capacity of the Association of League of Nations. They invited members of the association as well as the newspapers in the town to the meeting to listen to Dr. Wirt on the situation of refugees, the possible relief activities and any request to Japan. They selected seven people as committee members, chaired by Mr. Shibusawa (10th February, 1922). They had the first meeting on 13th February, and decided to add

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

nine members, and set the secretariat at the association. On 15th they arranged a lecture by Dr. Wirt. On the 19th they organized a film show on the relief activities, combined with lectures by two Japanese members and Dr. Wirt. Dr. Wirt who gave talks all over Japan, including Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe, then left for China. The Relief Committee will have the second meeting on 24th February.²⁷

Wirt continues his journey in the Pacific region, setting up relief committees in China, Korea, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Australia. Along with 12 other national committees, the Japanese Armenian relief committee became a member of the Geneva based International Near East Association, which had the stated goal of “increase[ing] the efficiency of all organizations seeking to relieve the suffering and promote the social, economic, and industrial welfare of those in the Near East who have been rendered destitute by war or other causes beyond their control.”²⁸

Based on his previous research, Vicken Babkenian stated that, among the members of the Near East Relief Committee was Dr. Inazo Nitobe, a League of Nations official, and a member of Japan’s House of Peers.²⁹ However, we managed to find new materials on this theme, which refute the above-mentioned claim. According to the materials preserved in the National Archives of Armenia, Inazo Nitobe refused to become a member of the Honorary Committee of the Near East Relief, stating that being Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations at the time, he did not consider it expedient to accept the offer of N.E.R. Secretary General Gordon Berry to become a member. In his reply letter, Nitobe praised the humanitarian activity of the organization, at the same time clearly explaining the reason for not

²⁷ Koichi Tsuchida, interview in Armenia (Transcript of Eiichi Shibusawa Memorial Foundation Archives).

²⁸ National Archives of Armenia, Fund 430, List 1, Case 1285, p. 11.

²⁹ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally, Part One, ...*, op. cit.

accepting the membership offer, that is, due to his position he was obliged to be impartial, and if he accepted the offer he would not be able to do so.³⁰ Later, the position of the League of Nations, particularly Japan, on the Armenian issue allows us to conclude that Nitobe's decision fit into Japanese foreign policy at the time.

Contributions for the Armenian relief fund began to flow in from all classes of Japanese society- from ordinary people to government ministers, leading businessmen to royalty. A Japanese girl's school even assumed full responsibility for two Armenian orphans.³¹

We managed to find quite remarkable information from the memoirs of Poghos Nubar Pasha about the love and care that the Japanese had for the Armenian orphans. In his "Orphans' Sunday" published in the New York-based "Hayastani Kochnak" newspaper in 1927 Poghos Nubar writes: "*Mr. Vickrey, Secretary-General of the Near East Relief Organization, visited a Japanese girls' school in Tokyo, Japan, in July of this year. The students of the school are "sponsors" of an Armenian orphan named Mary Macharian, who is fully funded by the Japanese girls' school. Mary is in the American orphanage in Shira and bears the number 1760. The girls from Japan asked Mr. Vickrey to convey their sisterly greetings to Mary, and they have given a beautiful Japanese fan as a gift to their distant protégé.*"³²

One of the most important initiatives of the Near East Relief was the "Golden Rule Sunday" charity campaign, which began in 1923.³³ The essence of the initiative was that the donors ate the same food at their Sunday dinner as tens of thousands of Armenian orphans under

³⁰ National Archives of Armenia, Fund 430, List 1, Case 1291, p. 8.

³¹ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally, Part One, ...*, op. cit.

³² Պօղոս Նուբար, «Որբերու Կիրակիին» կոչ, տպուած՝ Հայաստանի Կոչնակ, Նիւ Եորք, ԻԷ. Տարի, թիւ, 48, 26.11.1927, էջ 1526:

³³ National Archives of Armenia, Fund 430, List 1, Case 1283, page 99 and verso, page 100.

the care of N.E.R. The campaign called the donors to remember thousands of orphans in need, and transfer financial aid to them.

In the first year, about \$1 million was raised. Japan was not left out of this charity campaign. There are archive materials, which indicate the list of the countries from which donations were transferred within the framework of the "Golden Rule Sunday" campaign. Japan is also mentioned in that list.³⁴ The motto of the December 2, 1923 charity campaign was: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you (or unto your children if left desolate) do ye even so unto them".

New Material Discoveries from the Archives of Eiichi Shibusawa Memorial Foundation

At Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, we managed to find an important registry about the donations, activities, and lectures by Eiichi Shibusawa and a group of people of different social and political status, who spared no effort to raise funds for Armenians in need. With great difficulty we managed to translate the registry from Middle Japanese, in which we found Shibusawa's thoughts that we have not yet read about in any book or article.* The translated exclusive material really sheds new light and reveals new facts about the work and activities of the Armenian Relief Fund in Japan, as well as about the compassionate attitude of the famous Japanese Entrepreneur Eiichi Shibusawa towards the Armenian nation. Some excerpts of the registry are presented below.³⁵

³⁴ National Archives of Armenia, fund 430, List 1, Case 1291, pp. 22, 23, 26.

* The registry was translated by Amalya Baloyan, a Japanese language specialist and translator.

³⁵ 洪沢青淵記電子資料, *Shibusawa's digital fund*, <https://medium.com/@vardanyananna/some-pages-from-the-registry-33d03ca71ef9>.

- ❖ About 40,000 people living in poverty are at risk of starvation. Yesterday in the Armenian Refugee Committee Shibusawa presented the fact that during the First World War the Turks killed, tortured and raped about 5,000,000 Armenians without any hindrance, half of whom died, and now 2,000,000 Armenians are starving.
- ❖ In 1922, Tsyogayi Shigou Shinbou kept Armenian refugees who had been harmed by the Turks for ten nights. The next morning, his employee Mr. Will came to the Shibusawa Eiichi Refugee Committee. He told him the names of dozens of people.
- ❖ Another employee gave a lecture to students in one of the classrooms at Hitobashi University (presumably Hitotsubashi) at 4 pm on February 10, where he managed to provide students' engagement.
- ❖ The issue of the Armenian refugees became a key question for the Japanese Committee. The committee was headed by Mr. Shibusawa.

10,000 was sent to the Armenian Refugee Fund. Another amount was transferred to the Armenian Musicians' Fund. In addition, it was decided to transfer 120 yen per child per year.

- ❖ Mr. Wirt mentioned that they have received Armenian refugees, most of whom have already been rescued, but 40,000 orphans are in danger of starvation.

He said. "If we do not save them, believe me, 40,000 people are doomed to starvation, we are human beings, we must do the impossible. Please help the recovering children".

Wirt also mentioned that a certain part of the donation was sent to Armenia.

- ❖ Wirt sent the project to Japan, receiving the support of Shibusawa and others.

❖ From the words of a member of the Goujmachiku International Relief Committee.

- Armenia was able to raise an uprising with its army. Considering Armenians to be of another religion, they took the lands belonging to Armenians. By leaving 4,000,000 people homeless, their homes were burned down. And those people had to flee and spread all over the world. 2,000,000 Armenians, fleeing through the desert, had no bread or water, for five years they ate plants and tree leaves and had severe times. Even now, there are people in Japan who can prove it. If we get enough donations, we can make their lives easier.

❖ The story of 40,000 Armenian orphans.

Mr. Wirt from the N.E.R. delivered a speech last night. He mentioned that yesterday the teacher of the Boys' School made a speech to a number of children, during which he talked about the Armenian orphans, after which 894 yen was collected.

He particularly said,

- Your article published in the newspaper, which talked about poor children, really made a noise this morning. Shibusawa seems to be a translator among us and them, he told us about the tears and problems of those children. The story of the poor orphans touched our hearts.

And Mr. Bors of the American Committee mentioned that the tears are insignificant and the money is very important, for which we are very grateful, we can repeat many times, we are grateful.

❖ At the end of February 1923, the amount raised by the Armenian Relief Committee was 20,000 yen, of which 4,000 was spent on staffing.

It is noteworthy that Japan's Prince Tokugawa observed the Golden Rule Sunday and sent a generous amount of money, accompanied by a beautiful personal letter, to the Near East Relief. He

also took a leading part in supervising and distributing literature on the Golden Rule Sunday to all members of the House of Peers.³⁶

Episodes, which shed light on the pro-Armenian activities in Shibusawa's biography

According to the issue of Magazine “Kokusai Chishiki” (Global Knowledge) of March 1923: “The Armenia Refugee Relief Committee reported to the media that they raised the fund of about 20,000 yen, and transferred most part of the fund to the US committee, and that they have decided to cease their activities. The Armenian Relief Committee raised the fund about 20,000 yen, by organizing such activities as lectures, concerts, film showings and theater performances, remitted \$4,000 to the US Near East Relief committee, and is now preparing to transfer the second remittance. Since the situation in the Near East seems to be getting better, we have decided to close our activities. We are now planning to organize the final fundraising campaign, and would be grateful if we could get as many donations as possible. We are responsible for transferring any donations collected after the closure. We expect more Buddhists could contribute. We own movie films introducing the situation of Armenian refugees, and are ready to lend them to be utilized.”³⁷

Both in the past and now, Shibusawa's impact, as a famous entrepreneur, who was one of the builders of modern Japan, is tangible in various corners of Japan. Still, looking around Japan, one can find dignified bronze statues of Shibusawa erected in a truly wide variety of places- not just at his birthplace or within the premises and headquarters of the companies that he founded but also in one corner of Japan's Kabuto-cho financial district and on the campuses of the

³⁶ Babkenian V., *A Forgotten Ally*, opt. cit.

³⁷ Koichi Tsuchida, interview in Armenia (Transcript of Eiichi Shibusawa Memorial Foundation Archives).

country's top business schools, as well as at Japan's largest social welfare facility.³⁸ The great appreciation for Eiichi Shibusawa's work is reflected in the fact that from 2024 the portrait of Shibusawa will be on ¥ 10,000 banknotes.³⁹

However, the episodes related to Shibusawa's distant deep connection with the Armenian people have not been subject of any major study. From a distance of a century, the impression is created that the mercy of the Japanese people towards the Armenian people has been forgotten, lost from the pages of the joint history of the two friendly peoples. Our research is aimed at counteracting this view, valuing the historical relations between the Armenian and Japanese peoples. Despite the geographical distance, the peoples of the two friendly countries have always treated each other with mutual warmth. In general, there is an opinion that states make history. We believe that history is made up by powerful individuals and Shibusawa's example is a vivid proof of that.

The Armenian people are thankful to the great Japanese man

In 2021 the 4th President of the Republic of Armenia, Armen Sarkissian, had a working visit to Japan where he visited Shibusawa Eiichi's Memorial Foundation.⁴⁰

³⁸ Shimada Masakazu, *The Entrepreneur Who Built Modern Japan: Shibusawa Eiichi*, English translation by Paul Narum, Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2017, p. 5.

³⁹ *Japan Announces New ¥ 10,000, ¥5,000 and ¥1000 Bank Notes as Reiwa Era Looms*, The Japan Times, 09.04.2019, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/04/09/national/japan-introduce-new-%C2%A510000-%C2%A55000-%C2%A51000-banknotes/>

⁴⁰ *Working Visit of the President Armen Sarkissian to Japan*, Official Website of the President of RA, 23.07.2021, <https://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2021/07/23/President-Armen-Sarkissians-working-visit-to-Japan/>

At the Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Foundation, President Sarkissian met with its Director Koichi Kabayama and Eiichi Shibusawa's grandson Masahide Shibusawa. Thanking the reception, President Sarkissian evaluated the visit as significant for Armenia. Expressing gratitude on behalf of the entire Armenian people and his own for the invaluable support provided to the Armenian people by Eiichi Shibusawa and his foundation, the President noted that Japan is an example for us. "As a nation, you have also lived through difficult times, you have had losses, sometimes you thought you lost everything, and then you recovered, you built your homeland. I hope we open a new page in the Armenian-Japanese relations, which will focus on the future, new technologies and new directions. It is with this mission that I am here." he said.⁴¹

Touching upon the activities of Eiichi Shibusawa, President Sarkissian noted that the life and work of the great Japanese businessman and philanthropist are an inspiring message for deepening Armenian-Japanese relations.⁴²

Afterwards, President Sarkissian handed over the "Henry Morgenthau" commemorative medal of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute to Masahide Shibusawa.⁴³ "Your grandfather, Eiichi Shibusawa, was a great businessman, one of the founders of the Japanese economy. He is the one who saved a large number of Armenians. And it is not just about saving lives. The most significant thing is that people survive and are reborn if they have hope. No matter how difficult it is today, if there is hope, you can survive; if there is hope, you can rebuild; if there is hope, you can go on with your life. You will have hope if you are strong; you will have hope if

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *The Presentation of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute's "Henry Morgenthau" Commemorative Medal to a Japanese Friend of the Armenian Nation*, Official Website of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/24.07.21.php>

you have friends, as in 1915, after the Genocide. We had friends, one of them was Ambassador Morgenthau, and the other was your grandfather, - said the President. -Today, this assessment is in some ways aimed at strengthening and developing the future Armenian-Japanese economic relations, and Japan's active support to Armenia's economic revival is just as during the Genocide, when the great Japanese businessman and philanthropist extended a hand to the Armenian people that gave them confidence in the future and hope for further aspirations and victories.”⁴⁴

It can be stated that the Japanese people did not remain indifferent both in the issue of salvation of the Armenian people during the years of the Armenian Genocide and in the issue of mercifully helping the Armenians who escaped the Genocide. In general, very little research has been done on Eiichi Shibusawa's pro-Armenian activities, as evidenced by the fact that several biographical books written about Shibusawa do not mention his connection to the Armenian people. Our article aims to shed new light on the unexplored episodes of this famous man's biography as well as to acquaint the Armenian people with the pro-Armenian activities of the great Japanese Armenophile.

⁴⁴ *Working Visit of the President Armen Sarkissian to Japan*, Official Website of the President of RA, 23.07.2021, <https://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2021/07/23/President-Armen-Sarkissians-working-visit-to-Japan/>

ԱՆՆԱ ՎԱՐԴԱՆՅԱՆ, տ.գ.թ.

*Հայաստանի պետական տնտեսագիտական
համալսարան, դասախոս
ԵՊՀ, Միջազգային հարաբերությունների
և դիվանագիտության ֆակուլտետ, մագիստրոս
«Արումենիա-Նիպոն» հայ-ճապոնական
գիտամշակութային միության ՀԿ-ի հիմնադիր նախագահ
Էլ.հասցե՝ vannarmenia@gmail.com*

ՎԻԳԵՆ ԲԱԲԿԵՆՅԱՆ, անկախ հետազոտող
*Ավստրալիայի ինստիտուտ, Հոլոքոստի և ցեղասպանության
ուսումնասիրությունների ենտրոն
Էլ.հասցե՝ vbab124@gmail.com*

ՃԱՊՈՆԱՑԻ ՄԵԾ ՀԱՅԱՍԵՐ ԷԻԶԻ ՇԻԲՈՒՍԱՎԱՅԻ ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԵՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ

ԱՍՓՈՓՈՒՄ

Հիմնաբառեր՝ Էիչի Շիբուսավա, Մերձավոր Արևելքի Նպաստամատույց կոմիտե, Հայոց ցեղասպանություն, մարդասիրական օգնություն, Հայ օգնության հանձնաժողով, Տոկեի Մարու, ճապոնական նավ, Զմյուռնիայի ջարդեր, Հեղինե Մելիք-Հայկազյան:

Հետազոտության նպատակն է վերհանել 1915 թ. հայերի ցեղասպանությունից հետո ճապոնացի գործարար, բարերար

Էիչի Շիբուսավայի մարդասիրական օգնության և կամեցողության դրսևորումները հայազգի փախստականների նկատմամբ: Այս հողվածի նպատակն է նոր փաստերի շնորհիվ ի հայտ բերել Ճապոնիայում գործող Հայ օգնության հանձնաժողովի գործունեության և Շիբուսավայի կենսագրության չուսումնասիրված դրվագները, ինչպես նաև հայ և ճապոնացի ժողովուրդներին ծանոթացնել ականավոր ճապոնացու հայամետ գործունեությանը: Մեր հետազոտությունը մեծապես կնպաստի հայ և ճապոնացի բարեկամ ժողովուրդների առավել քան մեկդարյա բարեկամական հարաբերությունների վերաբժևորմանը և ամրապնդմանը: