



From The Editor's Desk

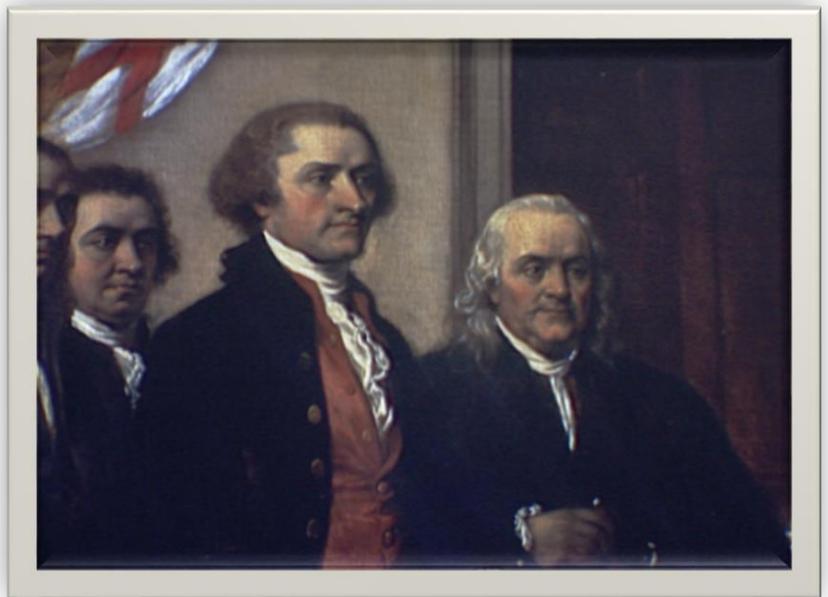
Martha Chaiklin



A good researcher has a combination of skill, luck, and access to resources. Skill is gained through education and practice.

This special edition of *Shashi* is designed to assist the reader in achieving the latter two attributes.

Luck by definition is the random occurrence of events that are outside of human control. Yet we as humans find comfort in the idea that we can reverse the impact of the random chaos of the universe on our lives. Many great men have ascribed to this belief. (It isn't that women don't believe this, there are just fewer of them who are quoted). For inspiration a few examples are included below.



Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, Detail of *Declaration of Independence* (1817), painting by John Trumbull in the U.S Capitol Building. Photograph by Theodor Horydczak. Collection of the Library of Congress.

"I'm a greater believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it"

— Thomas Jefferson

"Diligence is the mother of good luck."

— Benjamin Franklin

“Shallow men believe in luck or in circumstance. Strong men believe in cause and effect.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

— Louis Pasteur

Perhaps the most famous of all quotes on luck, paraphrased by the likes of Oprah Winfrey, is that attributed to the Stoic philosopher and advisor to Nero, Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BCE - 65 ACE). He wrote:

“Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity “

In Japanese there are some proverbs that suggest the same idea:

運をまたせは死を待つ等し

Un o matase wa shi o matsu hitoshi

Waiting for luck is like waiting for death

運は天にあり、鎧は胸にあり

Un wa ten ni ari, yoroi wa mune ni ari

Luck is in heaven, but armor is on your chest



Samurai in Armor ca. 1877 Stillfried & Andersen, publisher, Collection of the Library of Congress

All of these quotes are about the power of self-determination and persistence, both crucial qualities for anyone attempting to write history from primary sources. But, as Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) said, “Ability is of little account without opportunity. “

One of the biggest problems that researchers outside of Japan or a handful of elite universities have is access to Japanese language materials. Digitization has yet to make significant inroads into the vast array of historical resources. The small proportion available are largely in subscription databases inaccessible to many scholars.

In this special issue of *Shashi* we have sought to assist our readers in however small a way to create their own luck and provide them with some opportunity to make the most of their abilities by providing digitized versions of some historical sources on Japanese business. Each article represents a different aspect of business history from the

early twentieth century: banking, trade and management. If our readers find it of use, we will make this a regular feature.

We also have the pleasure of introducing a new addition to our editorial board, Professor David G. Wittner of Utica College. Wittner is an historian of modern Japan whose specialties are the history of technology, industrialization, and technology transfer. He focuses on technological choice and the industrialization of the iron, silk reeling, and cotton spinning industries. His publications include: *Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Modern Japanese Empire*, (with Philip C. Brown, Routledge, 2016), *Technology and the Culture of Progress in Meiji Japan* (Routledge, 2008), *Commodore Matthew C. Perry and the Perry Expedition to Japan* (Rosen Publishing Group, 2004). His recent work examines the visual culture of technological artifacts and the formation of socio-technological systems in Meiji textile industries. He is a valuable addition to our team.



Gratitude is due to Kazuyo Konagaya Good for her assistance with this issue.

As always, we seek articles, research notes, or other interesting and helpful contributions to the study of business and company history.



Trade Card "Ye Book of Good Luck, Publishers Proof R. L. Prang & Co. Detail. Collection of the New York Public Library



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