Experiencing the Historic, Artistic and Educational Legacy of Mitsubishi

A Guide to Art Galleries in the City,
and a Get-away Drive to a Farm in the Suburbs

The founding family of the old Mitsubishi organization left an impressive legacy of architecture, treasures and landscaping, including Toyo Bunko, which houses the first Latin Printing of Marco Polo’s Description of the World, the Mitsubishi Ichigokan, a symbol of the modernization of Japan in the late 19th century that was reborn as today’s art museum, the Seikado Bunko Art Museum, which houses the Inaba Tenmoku, (a national treasure said to be the most beautiful of the three Yohen Tenmoku tea bowls surviving to this day), and Koiwai Farm, renowned for its sound environmental management, sustainability and recycling. Here we present a selection of architecture, treasures and landscaping that have deep connections with Mitsubishi. These cultural treasures are open to the public. We hope you will use this information to experience the history and culture of these sites.
A quiet spot in nature

The Seikado Bunko Library and the Seikado Bunko Art Museum

A 10 minute walk from Kinuta-koen Park will take you to Seikado Bunko, which occupies an English-style country cottage in a quiet residential area of Okamoto, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, where the natural setting of Musashino is still preserved.

The Seikado Foundation currently possesses about 200,000 old Japanese and Chinese books and documents, and as many as 6,500 antique works of art, including 84 masterpieces registered by the Japanese Government as National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties.

This collection of important cultural materials was started around 1887 by Yanosuke Iwasaki, the second president of the Mitsubishi Company, who retained an admiration for Far Eastern culture, which had fallen into neglect during the period of the Westernization of Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912), and wished to preserve such cultural materials and prevent them from becoming scattered and lost. The collection was enlarged and strengthened by the founder’s son Koyata Iwasaki, Mitsubishi’s fourth president.

In 1992, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Seikado collection, a new art museum was opened and activities in this area greatly expanded.

“Seikado” is the studio-name of Yanosuke Iwasaki.

The exhibition is held several times a year with information and lectures by special researchers, librarians and curators available. (Check exhibition schedules before your visit since there is no regular display)

The library is available for use by prior arrangement only. The museum is open only during exhibitions. It may also close on an ad hoc basis. Please use the Hello Dial service to inquire for details.

URL: http://www.seikado.or.jp/

established the center as Japan’s first library devoted exclusively to Asian Studies. Toyo Bunko currently houses around 1,000,000 books and materials in Japanese, Chinese, various other Asian languages and European languages, including globally important literature such as five works designated as national treasures and seven works designated as important cultural properties. Toyo Bunko is an important center for Asian studies in Japan and globally.

A museum has been established to house these valuable works and promote Asian studies. Using the latest digital technologies and architecturally-designed spaces it displays a long-hidden collection of rare books and pictures, with an emphasis on works designated as national treasures or important cultural properties. Visitors can also refresh themselves at the on-site restaurant “Orient Café,” which is operated and directly supplied by Koiwai Farm.

URL: http://www.toyo-bunko.or.jp/

Lectures on Asian studies, a tradition since 1926, are offered biannually in spring and autumn.

URL: http://www.toyo-bunko.or.jp/
The Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo, opened in Marunouchi, Tokyo, in the spring of 2010 as an art museum. It holds three special exhibitions a year featuring mainly modern art from the latter half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. The original red brick building was designed by Josiah Conder and made use of the Queen Anne style of architecture from the Victorian era in England. The building was erected in 1894 by Mitsubishi as the first Western-style office building in Tokyo’s Marunouchi district. The original structure was torn down in 1968, but faithfully reconstructed as much as possible with reference to the original building plans and photographs.

Collections center on Western art from the late 19th century, the same era as the original building. These include works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Odilon Redon, and Félix Vallotton, among others. Inside the museum, there is the Café 1894; Store 1894, the museum store; the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Archive Room, where visitors can feel the history of Marunouchi; and the Mitsubishi Center Digital Gallery, where one can view the Mitsubishi Group’s archived cultural assets. The museum is truly a space in which visitors can imagine the era when Marunouchi was once a red brick city affectionately known as the “London Block.”

The Mitsubishi Archives were established in 1995 as an annex to the Mitsubishi Economic Research Institute (MERI) to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the founding of Mitsubishi. The Archives are located on the site of the former residence of Hikoyata Iwasaki (Yataro’s grandson), next to the former main residence of the Iwasaki Family—an area with a long connection to Mitsubishi.

The main mission of the Mitsubishi Archives is to safely keep Mitsubishi’s historical business documents and materials, to conduct research and studies on the history of Mitsubishi’s diverse business development since its establishment at the dawn of the Meiji era down to modern times, along with that of Japanese industry, and to give the public access to these materials. There is an exhibition hall where visitors can view a panel display of Mitsubishi’s history and its historical context, as well as a selection of Mitsubishi’s actual historical artifacts. The collection includes original writings of Yataro Iwasaki, documents including contracts from Mitsubishi’s earliest days, public records, old photographs, and other items that tell the fascinating history of industrial development in Japan, and at Mitsubishi.

The exhibition hall is open to the public. Historical documents and records available for study by prior arrangement only.

URL: http://www.meri.or.jp

An art museum exhibiting mainly modern art

Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo

The exhibition hall is open to the public. Historical documents and records available for study by prior arrangement only.

URL: https://mimt.jp/english

1. The elegant brick exterior of the Mitsubishi Archives
2. Reading room available by reservation
3. The display makes it easy to understand Mitsubishi’s history and Historical background
Experience the cultural legacy of Mitsubishi, the historic architecture and landscaping maintained and managed in its original state. Since these are open to the public, visitors are free to stroll around and learn about the culture and history of the area.

The birthplace of Yataro Iwasaki, the founder of Mitsubishi

In 1835, Yataro Iwasaki was born here as the eldest son of Yajiro and Miwa Iwasaki. His brother Yanosuke and eldest son Hisaya were also born here. The site is enclosed by a hedge, and contains the thatched cottage that was relocated here around 1795 by Yataro’s great grandfather, and an earthen-walled storehouse built in the Meiji period. The ornamental tiles of the storehouse roof display the Iwasaki family crest, a three-tiered water chestnut design that is the origin of the three-diamond Mitsubishi symbol. The stones in the inner garden were arranged by Yataro himself during his youth to represent the Japanese archipelago. They are thought to represent the ambitious global dreams of the young man.

Mitsubishi’s birthplace blessed by Tosa Inari

Tosa Inari Shrine started in the middle of the Edo period when Toyotaka Yamanouchi, the leader of the Tosa Domain, built the western storehouse of the Tosa Domain’s Osaka headquarters as an Inari shrine. It became the property of Yataro Iwasaki in the Meiji period, and the shrine later became the guardian of Mitsubishi from his devoutness. The location is also the origin of Mitsubishi and where Tsukumo Shokai was established.

Koiwai Farm began as one tree planted on waste land

Koiwai Farm

Koiwai Farm was named using the first kanji syllable in each of the family names of its cofounders: Gishin Ono (then vice president of Japan Railway—with “O” read as “Ko”), Yanosuke Iwasaki (then president of Mitsubishi), and Masaru Inoue (then Director General of the Railway Agency). Many decades were spent on the foundation as the ground was acidic and extremely sterile as of its opening in 1891. Today the site attracts a lot of visitors as a fertile farm, and many of the buildings are designated as important cultural properties. The farm also offers tours of its historic buildings and production sites, and runs participative programs to help promote interest and understanding of dairy farming and forestry.

URL: [https://www.koiwai.co.jp/](https://www.koiwai.co.jp/)

The stately home of the Iwasaki Family

Kyu-Iwasaki-tei Gardens

British architect Josiah Conder, whose work includes Rokumeikan and St. Nicholas’s cathedral, designed this mansion for Hisaya Iwasaki. Although there used to be more than 20 buildings on the site of about 50,000 m², only three of them remain today: the Western-style house, the billiard hall, and the Japanese-style house. This style is Jacobian, in the manner of the British Renaissance, and the interior is highly ornamental. The delicate design, which was rare in the architecture of the time, will transport you back to the early days of modern Japan.

URL: [https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/index035.html](https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/index035.html)

Sites Related to Mitsubishi’s History

- **Mitsubishi Profile**
  - 19
- **URL** [https://www.tosainari.jp/](https://www.tosainari.jp/)
- **URL** [https://www.koiwai.co.jp/](https://www.koiwai.co.jp/)
- **URL** [https://www.tosainari.jp/](https://www.tosainari.jp/)
- **URL** [https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/index035.html](https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/format/index035.html)
Kiyosumi Gardens, a sublime garden of the Meiji era

Yataro Iwasaki purchased the estate grounds of a daimyo of the Edo era, to provide his workers and noble guests with a place for recreation. The work of landscaping continued after his death, and was completed as a sublime garden with a central pond surrounded by well-maintained paths and trees. Although it suffered great damage in the Great Kanto Earthquake, the garden helped save a number of lives as it was used as housing for evacuees. Yataro’s heirs donated it to the City of Tokyo in the following year of 1924, when it reopened as Kiyosumi Gardens.

URL: https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/teien/en/kiyosumi/index.html

Rikugien Gardens

A confidant of one of the early Tokugawa shoguns built this exquisite Japanese garden in what is now Tokyo. It was counted as one of the two greatest gardens of the Edo period. (The other is Koishikawa Korakuen.) The garden has been nationally designated as a Special Place of Scenic Beauty. This delicate garden contains a man-made pond and hills raised at the corner of Muashino plan, which gives it a feeling of warmth. Yataro Iwasaki obtained the garden at the beginning of the Meiji era. His descendants donated it to the City of Tokyo in 1938.

Twitter: @RikugienGarden
URL: https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/teien/en/rikugien/index.html

Relax and enjoy the fabulous view of the changing seasons at Sanyo-so

Sanyo-so is an elegant Japanese-style villa constructed for Hisaya Iwaski in the middle of an expansive garden designed by Kyoto-based gardener, Jihei Ogawa. The estate was converted to a hotel in 1947, and it still offers a great view of the 10,000 m² garden. Registered as a national tangible cultural property in June 2017.

URL: http://www.princehotels.co.jp/sanyo-so/

Hakone Yumoto Yoshiike Ryokan is situated in a tranquil yet expansive garden

Hakone Yumoto Yoshiike Ryokan

Situated in one corner of an impressive 33,000 m² garden, this state registered cultural property is a former villa of the Iwasaki family estate, and is surrounded by spectacular scenery. Now run as a Yoshiike Ryokan Hotel (established in 1941), it offers visitors a chance to ramble along the paths of the landscaped garden, which was completed in 1908, enjoy the cherry blossoms, azalea, and calla lilies in spring, hydrangeas in summer, and colored leaves in autumn.

URL: http://www.yoshiike.org/

Hotel de YAMA

A resort hotel with a beautiful garden and a view of Lake Ashi

Hotel de YAMA

Built on the site of a late Iwaski’s villa, this resort hotel is situated by Lake Ashi. Visitors can enjoy the changing view of the seasons with azalea and rhododendron planted by Koyata Iwasaki over 100 years ago, while Mt. Fuji sits majestically in the background.

URL: http://www.hakone-hoteldeyama.jp/en/

Tonogayato Gardens abound with natural paths

Tonogayato Gardens

This garden was originally founded as a villa for Sadaya Eguchi, who later became president of South Manchuria Railways Co. The Iwasaki family purchased the villa from him in 1929, commissioning Saku Tsuda to design additional buildings including a Western-style mansion and a Japanese tea house (Kyoyote). The garden also features a pond and roaming wildlife. Visitors can enjoy the changing view of the seasons with azalea and rhododendron planted by Koyata Iwasaki over 100 years ago, while Mt. Fuji sits majestically in the background.

URL: https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/teien/contents/index036.html
Housed in an historic building, the rich history of the Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works spans over 160 years.

**Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works Historical Museum**

The Historical Museum was opened in 1985 in a refurbished historic building in the premises of Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works. The building was originally built in 1898 during the formative years of the shipbuilding industry. It was built as a wood pattern shop for producing the molds for metal castings in response to the increasing demand for cast-metal products. The brick building was the first electrified workshop in Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works. Inside the museum, more than 900 items are displayed, including a collection of the oldest machinery tools in Japan such as the very first domestically-developed steam turbine. In July 2015, the building was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as one of the assets comprising the Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution.

**Meijiseimeikan**

Meijiseimeikan is reinforced concrete building with a steel framework featuring eight floors above ground and an additional two floors underground. Designed by Prof. Shinshiro Okada of Tokyo Art School (Tokyo University of Art), an influential figure in architecture of the day, it was completed in 1934 after three years of construction and boasted many advanced facilities at the time. Meijiseimeikan is highly appreciated as a masterpiece of classicism, and is considered one of the best modern Western-style buildings. Surviving the tumultuous Showa era, it was requisitioned by GHQ after WWII for use by the Allied Council for Japan.

**NYK Maritime Museum**

The NYK Maritime Museum introduces more than 130 years of Nippon Yusen Kaisha's history, from the company's secret origin to its activities in the modern era. Museum exhibits feature extensive resources such as ship models, important documents, and beautifully printed pamphlets from passenger ships. The historic museum building was originally built as the Yokohama branch of NYK in 1936 and has distinctive Corinthian columns reaching up to the top of the second floor. Combination tickets that include entry into the NYK Hikawamaru; a ship moored only 15 minutes walk away, are also available.

**NYK Hikawamaru**

The Hikawamaru is a cargo-passenger ship that was built in 1930 to service the shipping route to Seattle. It was a state-of-the-art ship at that time, and is a reminder of the age of luxury passenger liners prior to World War II. During the war, the Hikawamaru served as a hospital ship, and was moored at a special pier in Yamashita Park in Yokohama in 1945. Open to the public in 2016 it was designated as a nationally important cultural property. The ship is a beloved symbol of Yamashita Park, and is highly regarded as a precious part of Japan's industrial heritage.

**Sado Gold Mine**

The Sado Gold Mine is a major gold and silver mine that was developed following the discovery of gold in 1601. After supporting the treasuries of the Edo and Meiji governments, it became a royal property in 1889 along with the Ikuno silver mine until it was sold to Mitsubishi Goshi Kaisha in 1896. The Sado Gold Mine remained under the management of Mitsubishi Mining Co., Ltd. (now Mitsubishi Materials Corporation) until its closure in 1989. Total gold production was 78 tons and silver production was 2,330 tons respectively over 388 years. The mine is open to the public for sightseeing, and Mitsubishi is working alongside the local government to have it appointed as a World Heritage Site.

**Ikuno Silver Mine**

Sand to be discovered in 1807, the great Ikuno Silver Mine was active through the Oda, Toyotomi, and Tokugawa periods, and along with the Sado Gold Mine supported the modernization of Japan. By the time of its closure in 1973, the mine had yielded 1,235 tons of silver. Today the mine tunnel has been opened to the public as a sightseeing attraction by a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Materials Corporation. In 2017, the mine was designated as one of the cultural assets comprising the Japan heritage “Gin-no-Bashamichi/Old Silver Mine Carriage Road.”

**Osarizawa Mine**

The Osarizawa Mine was discovered in 708. Mitsubishi obtained the mine in 1889. The mine produced 4.4 tons of gold, 155 tons of silver and 300,000 tons of copper until its closure in 1978. Today the mine is open to the public for sightseeing operated by a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Materials Corporation.

**Aloha Tower in Honolulu**

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**Sapporo Subway’s Tozai Line**

Sapporo Subway’s Tozai Line in Sapporo, Hokkaido is open to the public, in 2016 it was designated as a nationally important cultural property. The ship is a beloved symbol of Yamashita Park, and is highly regarded as a precious part of Japan's industrial heritage.