

Purpose of the Exhibition and Exhibition Outline

New Year Scene at Echigoya in
Surugacho by Torii Kiyonaga



Purpose

The year 2023 will mark 350 years since Mitsui Echigoya opened its doors in 1673. To celebrate this event, a special exhibition titled, “Mitsui Takatoshi and Echigoya: Business and Culture in 17th Century Japan” will be held at Mitsui Bunko’s Mitsui Memorial Museum.

The Mitsui Group was founded by Mitsui Takatoshi (1622–1694). When he was 52 years old, he opened “Echigoya,” a kimono fabrics shop. He was an innovative, Edo period businessperson, who overturned business conventions of the time with his commercial practice of “cash basis at fixed prices.” Takatoshi and his offspring came out on top through a variety of watershed commercial practices and developed their business further.

Alongside developing their businesses, the Mitsui families also devoted energies to such cultural activities as the tea ceremony. They collected many famous (*Meibutsu*) tea utensils during the Kyoho to Genbun years (1716–1741) when their businesses were growing at a particularly dramatic pace. Many fine articles from their collections have come to our museum.

In this exhibition, we have on display historical materials that are not commonly viewable such as the *Sochiku Isho* that served as the Mitsui family constitution and thick business ledgers; numerous *Meibutsu* tea utensils collected during those years of rapid growth, and paintings as well as articles from family ancestors. Through all this, our objective is to present to you in a straightforward way business, culture, and beliefs from the company’s founding period through its years of growth to help everyone to understand what conditions during those times were like. Some of the key elements of Mitsui’s ways of doing business and the secrets of how it managed to stay alive and grow across those first three generations may even be of relevance to business today. We hope you will enjoy this opportunity to savor the world of the Mitsui family, the greatest of the wealthy merchant clans of the Edo period.

Reference Materials: Please read the summary history of business and culture during the Mitsui family’s founding era that follows the exhibition overview below.

Exhibition Outline

This exhibition uses historical materials and artistic handicrafts to introduce the businesses of Mitsui’s founding era that would go on to become the Mitsui *zaibatsu* (conglomerate) and then the Mitsui Group, as well as the cultural activities of the Mitsui family during its dawning years.

We invite you to view fine articles collected by the Mitsui family as well as historical materials that few members of the general public have seen. Among them you will find calligraphic

works and paintings as well as utensils and implements that were collected by founder Mitsui Takatoshi along with his grandfather, parents, siblings, and children; records that address the origins and development of the family business during its foundational years; famous utensils that were collected by members of the Mitsui family; and materials connected to the Mitsui family’s religious beliefs such as those connected to the Grand Shrines of Ise and to Mimeguri Inari Shrine.

Gallery 1:

Personal Belongings and Personages from Dawn of the Mitsui Business, From Echigo Domain Lord Mitsui to Takahira

In this gallery, we trace the footsteps of personages ranging from Takatoshi's grandfather Takayasu to Takatoshi's eldest son Takahira from the time of the company's founding through its dawn years. Here are presented historical materials and artistic handicrafts that include handwritten items, personal belongings, and related materials.

The gallery displays episodes that date prior to Mitsui's founding, as well as depictions of personages from the company's early years. The items on show include the only surviving document inscribed with "Mitsui Echigo no Kami" that includes Takayasu's name (1-1); a painting of a store front that brings to mind the shop run by elder brother Takatsugu where Takatoshi worked when he went to Edo at age 14 (1-2); a portrait of Takatoshi and his wife (1-3); socks that actually belonged to Takatoshi, an inkstone case said to have belonged to his wife Kane, and correspondence said to be in the couple's own handwriting (1-4); and a statue of Jurojin made by Takahira.



1-1: Contract with the Honorary Lord of the Echigo Province



1-2: Illustration Showing the "Kuginuki-mon" Shop Layout



1-3: Painting of Mitsui Takatoshi and Spouse



1-4: Ledger in Takatoshi's Own Handwriting from the Matsusaka Years

Gallery 2:

Takatoshi's Personal Belongings 1 = Tea bowl, named "Sairai," Aka-raku ware

This tea bowl was made by Donyu (familiarily known as "Nonko"), the 3rd generation master of the Raku house. This bowl is said to have been used by Takatoshi specifically for *koicha* ("thick tea") at the lavish family banquet held annually in Matsusaka. It was given to Takatomo—the founder of the Muromachi line of the Mitsui family—at his request, during Takatoshi's lifetime, and it has been handed down through the Mitsui family ever since. As such, it is the only extant memento connected with Takatoshi's practice of the tea ceremony.



2: Tea bowl, Aka-raku ware, by Raku Donyu named "Sairai," Mitsui Takatoshi's personal collection

Gallery 3:

Takatoshi's Personal Belongings 2

Here is the *Jittoku*-style cloak worn by Takatoshi. The *jittoku*-style cloak is derived from the clothing worn by monks. During the Edo period, it was outer wear used by Confucian scholars, physicians and artists. It was made of silk gauze or light fabric (3).



3: *Jittoku*-style cloak (worn by Takatoshi)

Gallery 4:

Vestiges of Takatoshi and the History of Mitsui's Founding Years

The origins and development of the Mitsui business have been divided up here into seven topics here: (1) Takatoshi in Matsusaka, (2) Echigoya's founding, (3) relocation to Suruga-cho, (4) the Mitsui business, (5) the expansion to the three major cities, (6) the handing over of the family business to the children, and (7) prosperity in Suruga-cho. All told, the Gallery brings together the vestiges of Takatoshi as it traces down the years.

This exhibit presents records and objects related mainly to business. These items include (4-1) the rules of Echigoya's founding period in 1673; (4-2, 4-3) records and tools related to Mitsui's two

mainstay businesses of the kimono trade and finance; (4-4) items connected with doing official work for the shogunate, including a *go* chest gifted from Honinbo Doetsu; (4-5) paintings showing Mitsui shops in the three major cities of the Edo period (Kyoto, Edo, and Osaka); (4-6) a ledger for "Omotokata," the Mitsui family's central administrative body; as well as the *Sochiku Isho* (4-7), a family constitution of sorts that details how the business is to be handed down to later generations and how it is to be organized.



4-1: *Sho-Hatto-Shu*, The Rules for the First Stores in Edo



4-2: Measuring Scale of Exchange Store



4-3: General Accounting Ledger



4-4: *Go* Chest Gifted from Honinbo Doetsu



4-5: Triptych Showing the Three Shops in Edo, Kyoto, and Naniwa [Osaka]



4-6: Accounts ledger for Omotokata



4-7: *Sochiku-Isho*, The Last Will and Testament of Mitsui Takahira

Gallery 5:

Tea Utensils from the Kyoho to Genbun Years (1716–1741)

In the Mitsui family, the development of the Mitsui business and the accumulation of wealth created a desire to spend on cultural pursuits. The tea ceremony, in particular, was an essential cultural attainment for wealthy merchants in Kyoto, and owning particularly noted tea ceremony utensils was both a symbol of status as well as a way to provide collateral in business transactions. Accordingly, the Mitsui families began to collect famous utensils during the Kyoho (1716–1736) and Genbun (1736–1741) years. We can get a glimpse of these activities through famous tea ceremony utensils and utensil notebooks donated by the Mitsui family.

Here we have on display (I) a *Karamono Katatsuki* tea caddy, an Important Cultural Asset acquired during the Kyoho years (known as “Kita no Katatsuki,” 5-1); (II) a *Chuko Meibutsu* Ko-Seto ware tea caddy collected by Takahira, 2nd head of the Kita Mitsui family (named “Futami,” 5-2); (III) the “Shindaisu Book of Secrets,” from Takafusa, the 3rd head of the Kita Mitsui family (5-3); (IV) a *Chuko Meibutsu* Ko-Seto ware tea caddy, collected in the Genbun years (named “Jonyo-in,” 5-4); and (V) an *Juko* celadon type tea bowl, named “Haran,” 5-5) that is listed in the Shinmachi Mitsui family’s “Register of Genbun Tea Utensils.”



5-1: *Karamono Katatsuki* Tea Caddy, known as “Kita no Katatsuki”
Important cultural property



5-2: Tea Caddy, named “Futami,”
Futami-de type, Ko-Seto ware



5-3: Shindaisu book of secrets



5-4: Tea Caddy, named “Jonyo-in,”
Koshiji-de type, Ko-seto ware



5-5: Tea Bowl, named “Haran,” *Juko* celadon type

Gallery 6:

Information about Takatoshi and His Spouse and Takatoshi’s Note Admonishing Himself

Displayed here is a letter from Takatoshi to his fourth son Takatomo, who founded the Muromachi Mitsui family; a letter from Takatoshi’s wife Kane to Takatomo; and a letter of self-admonishment by Takatoshi meant to discipline himself.



Takatoshi's Note Admonishing Himself

Gallery 7:

The Mitsui Family and Deities

The Mitsuis during the Edo period had a devout belief in the deities. They set store by the Seven Lucky Gods such as Ebisu and Daikokuten, who were thought of as delivering benefits for business prosperity; Inari (through the Mimeguri Inari shrine), which was held to offer a variety of benefits ranging from business prosperity to a good harvest; and the Ise Jingu Shrine in Ise, the birthplace of the Mitsui family. The family also had in the years before World War II an ancestral shrine called Akina Reisha to venerate Mitsui family ancestors, and there they collected records that told of the family's history prior to Takatoshi's time.

On display here are (I) a painting of one of the lucky gods made by Heads of the Mitsui family, as an example of their faith

in those deities (7-1); (II) a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine mandala (7-2) and records related to the Dai-dai Kagura performance at the shrine (7-3), which together demonstrated the family's beliefs toward that institution; (III) an illustration that depicts the Mimeguri Inari Shrine, demonstrating their Inari beliefs (7-4); and (IV) items showing their connection with the Akina Reisha ancestral shrine like armor stored there that is said to have come down from Takatoshi's grandfather Takayasu (7-5), along with a logbook and film that convey what conditions were like at that ancestral shrine before World War II (7-6). Together, these exhibits show how the Mitsui family went about its belief in the deities primarily during the Edo period.



7-1: Painting of Daikokuten, Mitsui Takahira (inscription), Mitsui Takafusa (painting)



7-2: Ise Shrine Pilgrimage Mandala



7-3: Perspective Picture of a Most Solemn Kagura Performance Held at the Two Shrines in the Grand Shrine of Ise (depicting a Dai-dai Kagura performance)



7-4: Most Celebrated Location in Musashi Province, Illustration of the Sumida River and Historic Sites (illustration also includes Mimeguri Shrine)



7-5: Armors, Sacred Treasures of Akina Reisha, by Kunii Osho



7-6 Logbook from Akina Reisha (reporting succession from Takamine to Takakimi)

Reference Materials

1 | Regarding the Mitsui Takatoshi and Founding Years of Mitsui's Business

Mitsui Takatoshi (1622–1694) was born in Ise Matsusaka (present-day Matsusaka City, Mie Prefecture). His grandfather Takayasu declared himself to be the honorary lord of Echigo Province (Echigo no Kami) as a commander for Sasaki Rokkaku, the warlord of a domain in the southern part of what today is Shiga Prefecture. After Rokkaku's death, he then moved to Ise Province (present-day Mie Prefecture). During the era of Takatoshi's parents—father Takatoshi (written with different characters) and mother Shuho, the Mitsui family was engaged in the *sake*, *miso*, and pawnbroker businesses. They thrived particularly due to the business acumen of mother Shuho. Their shop was called “Echigo-dono no sakaya,” but it was given the name of “Echigoya” by order of the lord of Matsusaka of the time.

Takatoshi was the youngest of eight children. His eldest brother Toshitsugu was able to set up shop selling everyday wares and clothing in Edo's Honcho district (present-day Nihonbashi in Tokyo). There, Takatoshi honed his skills and helped the shop to flourish. He returned home at 28 to look after his mother and took up work in the moneylending business. Takatoshi did not set up his own business in Edo during Toshitsugu's lifetime, but after he passed away in 1673 Takatoshi opened the kimono fabrics “Echigoya” shop with a 9-*shaku* (approx. 2.7 meters) frontage in that same Honcho district. Simultaneously, he also opened a procurements shop in Kyoto. This marked the start of the Mitsui family business. (And it is for this reason that Takatoshi is referred to as “founder” in records from the founding years of the business.)

The actual operation of the shops was left in the hands of Takatoshi's sons. As can be surmised from the sign that read, “Cash basis at fixed prices,” the sale of goods at set prices and the variety services the shop offered satisfied Edo residents' needs. A decade later in 1683, the shop relocated to the Suruga-cho district, where they also opened a money exchange store. During the Genroku years (1688–1704), Mitsui became an official purveyor of kimono fabric and official money exchange business for the shogunate. Takatoshi became a wealthy merchant, with large shops located in the three major cities of Edo, Kyoto and Osaka. He had become recognized by both himself and others as “Japan's leading merchant.” Takatoshi had seen through an expansion into two areas of business and the opening of shops in Japan's three major cities. In 1694, he passed away at the age of 73.

After Takatoshi's death, the shops were carried on by his children and veteran employees who had been with the business since its founding, and they threw all their efforts into the business. During the Kyoho years (1716–1736), among them there was a succession of retirements and deaths. Coupled with economic hard times arising from a reorganization of the shogunal administration in the wake of the Kyoho Reforms, the Mitsui family would come face to face with the issues of how to approach its business and succession by later generations. The Mitsuis established a central administrative body called “Omotokata,” which brought together their multiple businesses, numerous shops and abundant family members. They thus set up a framework for managing the business and the family itself in an integrated fashion.

Takatoshi's eldest son Takahira also wrote *Sochiku Isho*, which in the form of his will spelled out a family constitution for the Mitsuis. With the Mitsuis held to comprise nine branch families, this document set the course for how to handle the family and its businesses, such as by setting down rules on shared assets. The number of families that comprised the Mitsui line would later be expanded to 11.

Furthermore, in order to pass the businesses and mementos from Takatoshi on down on to future generations, Takatoshi's children wrote in a variety of records the history of the Mitsui family and its business. Through these various efforts, Mitsui was able to weather its era of crisis.

With the Genbun years (1736–1741), thanks to the shogunate's recoining its currency business improved and operating profits grew at their highest levels during the Edo period. With this, the money that went back to the Mitsui families also grew, and their expenditures in the cultural sphere became remarkable. In particular, they enthusiastically went about collecting tea utensils; it was during this period, that they acquired many famed *Omeibutsu* and *Chuko Meibutsu* tea utensils.

2 | Cultural Aspects of the Founding Years of Mitsui's Business, Part 1: Tea Ceremony

Takatoshi's Personal Red Raku ware Tea Bowl

In *Nippon eitaigura* [The eternal storehouse of Japan] by famed writer Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), Mitsui Takatoshi was lauded as “the model of a great merchant” and “a priceless world treasure.” His image was that of someone committed to business with no interest in amusements. However, it is common for great merchants—even those who may be described as fabulously wealthy—to also be familiar with the world of pastimes and amusements, and to also make their mark in the cultural sphere. The tea ceremony in particular thrived in Japan's major cities during the medieval and early modern periods as an example of traditional culture. It was something that even Takatoshi had to be knowledgeable about. The Tea Bowl named “Sairai” (Red Raku ware, by Donyu) that Takatoshi owned bears eloquent testimony to that reality. It is the bowl in which Takatoshi is said to have made *koicha* (“thick tea”) from his seat at the lavish family banquet held annually in Matsusaka. Made by Donyu (also known as Nonko), the 3rd head of the Raku family, it was given to Takatomo—the 1st head of the Muromachi Mitsui family—at Takatomo's request prior to Takatoshi's death, and it has been handed down through the Mitsui family ever since. It is a unique tea ceremony-related memento of Takatoshi's.

Kyoho Years (1716–1736)

When it comes to the tea ceremony in the Mitsui family, we know from the existence of a Red Raku ware tea bowl (named “Sairai”) that had been cherished ever since Takatoshi's time. Furthermore, a full tea ceremony display stand thought to have been brought by Takatoshi's wife Kane from her birth family (the Nakagawa clan) is listed as an inheritance from Kane (named “Jusan”) in the 1715 register of tea utensils for the Isarago Mitsui family. It suggests that the tea ceremony was culture of the sort that one should be interested in among the wealthy merchants of Matsusaka where it flourished.

The first of the famed items to come into the Mitsui family collection was the *Karamono Katatsuki* Tea Caddy, known as “Kita no Katatsuki.” It came from the so-called *Higashiyama gyomotsu* collection of Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436–1489), the 8th shogun of the Muromachi shogunate (1336–1573). According to the historical records in Mitsui Bunko, the tea caddy appeared during the Kyoho years (1716–1736) as collateral for a loan to Miki Gondayu. Most likely, the caddy passed to the Mitsuis when the loan was defaulted, and by around the time of Takafusa, 3rd head of the Kita Mitsui Family, it had entered their collection.

Since Takatoshi's day, the Mitsui family had been in the service of the Kishu Tokugawa family who administered Matsusaka. Perhaps due to that relationship, when it came to the tea ceremony they became deeply involved with the Omotesenke family, which was also in service to the Kishu Tokugawa family. Of the tea ceremony utensils that have come to this museum, perhaps the earliest example is the incense container in the shape of a *hakuzosu* (a fox disguised as a Buddhist monk), which came on the first day of 1722 from Kakukakusai Sosa, 6th head of the Omotesenke family.

Takahira, 2nd Head of the Kita Mitsui Family (1653–1737)

As we saw in Gallery 4, the Mitsui family's business had developed under the stewardship of Takatoshi's sons. However, it was during the Genbun years (1736–1741) that the Mitsui family business grew rapidly. With this, among their tea utensils, too, they began to collect the finer articles that are known as *Meibutsu*. This can be seen by carefully studying such things as how these *Meibutsu* came into the collection, accompany documents and notes of authentication, and registers of tea utensils.

In his *Sochiku Isho* (which was modeled on Takatoshi's will), 2nd Kita Mitsui family head Takahira strictly warned against pride and overindulging in amusements. However, he also allowed that it was fitting to one's position to pursue personal interests in the twilight years after retirement. Takahira himself had a tea room on the grounds of his estate. He truly took pleasure in the tea ceremony, made his own utensils, and began to collect *Meibutsu*. Among those, the *Chuko Meibutsu, Futami-de* type, Ko-Seto ware Tea Caddy named “Futami” was held to be an exemplary tea caddy even for the Kita Mitsui Family later and was used at particularly formal tea ceremonies.

Takafusa, 3rd Head of the Kita Mitsui Family (1684–1748)

At age 18, Takafusa, 3rd head of the Kita Mitsui family, was appointed a purveyor of money exchange services to the shogunate. During the Kyoho years (1716–1736), at age 33 he succeeded to the name Hachiroemon and became the head of the Mitsui family itself. Around this time in the Mitsui family, Takahira's children would compile the *Sochiku Isho* family constitution, the *Shobaiki* business history and *Kadenki* family history, and in conjunction Takafusa would write *Chonin kokenroku*, in which he compiled his father Takahira's experiences. It was time for the family to look back on its history and subsequently fix in place its policies on business.

Even amid all this, Takafusa still led a life filled with diverse interests. He traveled everywhere on pleasure trips and to make pilgrimages. When it came to the tea ceremony, he was initiated into the procedures for using a formal tea stand (*shindaisu*) by Hattori Doen, a senior disciple of Kakukakusai Sosa, 6th head of the Omotesenke family. He also copied the Omotesenke family's book of secrets, and showed true interest in the tea ceremony. It is said that in his travels back and forth between Kyoto and Matsusaka he stopped off at Sairen-ji Temple in Iga to ask for the Iga ware Tea Bowl named "Sairen-ji."

Genbun Years (1736–1741)

Among the *Meibutsu* that Takafusa had in his possession during this period were such items as the *Chuko Meibutsu* Tea Caddy named "Jonyo-in" (*Koshiji-de* type, Ko-seto ware) and the Tea Caddy known as "Sakuma mentori" (*Mentori-de* type, Ko-Seto ware). In 1737, the year after his father Takahira died, Takafusa became a devout follower of the monk Reiku at Anrakuritsu-in Omi Province and took the tonsure. At this time, he also went on a cycle of pilgrimages to holy sites in western Japan. He also went on to Nagasaki, where it is believed that he acquired the Namban Screens showing the arrival of Westerners.

Entry in the Shinmachi Mitsui Family's "Register of Genbun Tea Utensils"

The Shinmachi Mitsui family's "Register of Genbun Tea Utensils" allows us to sneak a look at how the Mitsui family had begun to collect fine tea utensils during the Genbun years. Although the originals are not available for viewing, the tea utensils recorded in this register have been gifted to this museum. They include a *Juko* celadon type Tea Bowl named "Haran," along with four other tea bowls and three tea caddies.

The Shinmachi Mitsui family was led during the Genbun years by 2nd head Takanao. Like Takafusa, Takanao traveled widely. He was likewise deeply religious, and made votive offerings to such temples and shrines as Domyoji and Kitano Tenmangu, respectively. The utensils listed in the "Genbun Register of Tea Utensils" are thought to have been collected by Takanao and his successor, the 3rd head Takahisa.

Thus, as the foregoing shows, the Mitsui family business developed under Takatoshi and his sons, and then still further under the 3rd generation of Takafusa. During the Genbun years as their business grew yet further, the money that went back to each branch of the Mitsui family also increased, and it is imagined that this gave them the latitude to spend in pursuit of personal interests. The tea ceremony in particular was an essential culture attainment for wealthy merchants in Kyoto, and to own particular fine tea ceremony utensils was a mark of status. Because there were also instances of items being collateral in business transactions, the Mitsui family began its collection of *Meibutsu* tea utensils from around these years. We can get a glimpse of these activities through famous *Meibutsu* utensils and utensil registers donated by the Mitsui family.

3 | Cultural Aspects of the Founding Years of Mitsui's Business, Part 2: Belief in Deities

Belief in Gods of Fortune

The two deities of Daikokuten and Ebisu linked to business prosperity have especially esteemed to the merchant clan that is the Mitsui family. Ebisu-ko, which is known as a folk rite to pray for good harvests, big catches and business prosperity, are one kind of annual event that took place at the Mitsuis' kimono fabric business Echigoya. We also know that paintings and statues of Daikokuten and Ebisu were venerated there. In particular, Takafusa, the 3rd head of the Kita Mitsui family, executed numerous paintings of Daikokuten and Ebisu. It is said that these

works were gifted to each branch of the Mitsui family and adorned their shops in Edo and Osaka. In the Ebisu-ko held starting from the Genbun years, it became common practice to display Takafusa's paintings of Daikokuten and Ebisu during the rite. Because of this, within the Mitsui family Takafusa's works themselves were assigned the role of praying for business prosperity and stability in the family's business.

Belief in Ise Shrine

Mitsui family ancestor Mitsui Takayasu is said to have taken the name of Echigo no Kami when serving as a commander for Sasaki Rokkaku. However, it is believed that when Rokkaku was killed by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Takayasu took his family with him to Ise where he became a merchant.

Takayasu's second son Motokichi was adopted by a Shinto priest from Ise Yamada (present-day Ise City, Mie Prefecture) named Ochiai Todayu. He succeeded him and took the name Ochiai Gondayu. The involvements with Ise Shrine were close from this time. It was customary on occasions like the death anniversary days of Takayasu and Takatoshi to go on pilgrimages to Ise and have Ochiai family priests perform the Dai-dai Kagura. Among the materials handed down are historical records related to the Dai-dai Kagura performed in 1727 and the "Ise Shrine Pilgrimage Mandara" painting donated from the main shop in Kyoto to an Ise confraternity (*ko*) made up of artisans who frequented the establishment.

Belief in Mimeguri Inari Shrine

Mimeguri Shrine is a site for worship of Uka-no-mitama-no-mikoto. The name of this shrine that previously had not been particularly noted became well-known during the Genroku years (1688–1704) when the haiku poet Takarai Kikaku wrote a verse about praying for rain here. Since then, it has become much-loved as a holy site for haiku.

The Mitsui family in Edo came to venerate the shrine as their guardian deity sometime around the Kyoho years (1716–1736). It is thought the reason for this may have been because they expected it to play a role blocking off a demon gate owing to its location to the northeast of the Edo Honcho neighborhood where the family had established Echigoya, or perhaps it was because the character for "meguri" (廻) in the name "Mimeguri" contains within it the "i" (井) from the name "Mitsui" and evokes a link to the family. Over the years, the Mitsui family and its organization have supported repair and reconstruction work on the shrine's buildings and its sanctuary. In addition, even today a "divided spirit" from the shrine is venerated at each branch of the Mitsukoshi department store, which is connected with the Mitsui family. All of this speaks to the depth of the shrine's association with the Mitsui family down to this day.

Akina Reisha Shrine for Ancestral Veneration

Akina Reisha is a shrine where the Mitsui family's ancestors are worshipped. Today, it is located in one corner of the grounds of Mimeguri Shrine in Tokyo. Since its founding as the operators of a kimono fabric business, the Mitsui family has worshipped at Kokai Shrine, an auxiliary shrine to Konoshima Shrine in Kyoto's Uzumasa district. This latter shrine is dedicated to a deity of sericulture who is closely associated with silk fabrics. Later, over the course of the Horeki through Anei years (1751–1781), Kamuhatori, the priest of Konoshima Shrine, transferred the spirit of his ancestors to the inner sanctuary and named it Akina Reisha. With this, the Mitsui family to begin worshipping the renamed shrine. The spirits of family forebear Takayasu and his wife, along with those of the couples who have headed each branch family in the century after Takayasu's death, are venerated at Akina Reisha. Armor said to have been worn by Takayasu and other items were dedicated here as sacred treasures (currently stored at Mitsui Bunko).