

# Mitsukoshi's History

"Cash sales at fixed prices."

This is a slogan that Mitsukoshi invented in 1683. We are the first retailer in the world to have implemented one-price selling, which has now become common. As a result, kimonos that only wealthy people could afford at that time were made accessible to the general public. Since our foundation, we have continued making innovations in all areas including products and services and have helped people enjoy a good life. We will continue this policy in the 21st century.



**1673** In August, Echigo-ya, a kimono store, opened at Edo Honmachi 1-chome where the Bank of Japan is now located. The 330-year history of Mitsukoshi started with a small rented store whose entrance was only 2.7 m wide.








**1900** In October, the Nihonbashi Main Store abolished the *zauri* system where products are not displayed in the store but instead are stored at the back and clerks bring out the products to the customers upon their request. The store changed all the floor space into a display area and opened again in October 15. *Jiji Shinpo* newspaper dated October 17 reported the following: "The display area opened the day before yesterday. On the opening day, many people arrived in front of the store before dawn. When the door opened at 7:00 a.m., they flooded the store. At 10:00 a.m., the number of customers reached about 8,500 and about 1,140 m<sup>2</sup> of rooms on the first and second floors were filled to capacity. Then, the entrance was closed for a while and customers were not allowed in the store. ... A spokesperson for the store said that they were the most crowded since their foundation."



**1904** The constituent general meeting of the Department Store Mitsukoshi Gofukuten was held at The Mitsui Gofukuten on December 6 and Osuke Hibi was appointed the first senior managing director of the store. He issued a "department store proclamation" and established innovations one after another at a time when there was no model for department stores in Japan. The progressive measures are too many to enumerate and he was called "the giant of the department store industry."



Greetings were sent to customers and business partners in the joint names of Mitsui and Mitsukoshi from the middle of December 1904. The letter informed them that Mitsukoshi Drapery Store had taken over the business of Mitsui Drapery Store. The new store also declared itself to be a department store in the letter, describing its future policies as follows: "broaden the types of merchandise in the future ... to operate a part of business that department stores in the United States conduct." At the beginning of the next year, the store placed advertisements on the front pages of newspapers and magazines and published the contents of the letter as well as the "department store proclamation."

- 1673** • Takatoshi Mitsui opened a kimono store "Echigo-ya" at Edo Honmachi 1-chome.
- 1681** • The mark  was designated as the emblem of the store around that time
- 1683** • The store was relocated from Honmachi to Suruga-machi. A currency exchange shop (Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation of today) also opened on the site.
- 1691** • A kimono store and currency exchange shop opened at Korabashi 1-chome, Osaka.
- 1872** • The store separated from *Mitsui Omotokata (Grand Head Office)*, which was the organization controlling all business of the Mitsui Family, and the Mitsukoshi family started to run the business.
  - The store's emblem was changed to 
- 1893** • Echigo-ya was reorganized as The Mitsui Gofukuten (general partnership company).
- 1895** • Yoshio Takahashi was appointed as a board member and initiated a wholesale reform of the management.
- 1896** • The original mark  started being used again instead of .
- 1904** • Mitsukoshi Drapery Store Co., Ltd. was founded. The emblem was changed to . Osuke Hibi was appointed the first senior managing director. He issued a "department store proclamation" and the company became the first department store in Japan.
- 1907** • A restaurant opened in the store.
  - Products including bags, shoes and umbrellas were added to the assortment, and the number and type of items sold in the store increased.
- 1914** • The renaissance-style annex of the Nihonbashi Main Store was completed. Lion statues were set in place and the first escalators in Japan were built.
- 1923** • The Nihonbashi Main Store and the annex of the Marunouchi Store burned down during the Great Kanto Earthquake.
- 1927** • Mitsukoshi Hall (Mitsukoshi Theater of today) opened in the Nihonbashi Main Store.
  - The first fashion show in Japan was held.
- 1928** • The company name, Mitsukoshi Drapery Store was changed to Mitsukoshi, Ltd.
- 1929** • The Shinjuku Store opened.
- 1930** • The Ginza Store opened.



**1914** The annex of the Nihonbashi Main Store completed on September 15 was described as "the greatest architecture in the area east of the Suez Canal" and a masterpiece that deserved a page in the history of architecture. The store had a wide assortment of merchandise with an emphasis on kimonos. The first escalators and elevators in Japan were built. The style of a modern department store was completed.



**1960** Celebrating our 50th anniversary, the Statue of a Celestial Nymph created by Gengen Sato was placed in the central hall of the Nihonbashi Main Store on April 19. The unveiling ceremony was conducted on that day, inviting 500 people including eminent people from various fields and the press.

- 1930 ● "Special children's lunch (western-style)" was introduced at the restaurant in the Nihonbashi Main Store.
- 1931 ● The Takamatsu Store opened.
- 1932 ● The "Mitsukoshimae" subway station opened and the basement floor of the Nihonbashi Main Store was connected to the station.
  - The Sapporo Store opened.
- 1933 ● The Sendai Store opened.
- 1935 ● Renovation and extension work on the Nihonbashi Main Store was finished and the central hall was completed. A pipe organ was placed in the store.
- 1946 ● The Matsuyama Store, which was the first new store after World War II, opened.
- 1947 ● The Mitsukoshi Clinic Foundation (Mitsukoshi Health and Welfare Foundation of today) was founded.
- 1950 ● The first fashion show in the department store industry was held in the Nihonbashi Main Store.
- 1951 ● All stores started using wrapping paper designed by Genichiro Inokuma, "*Hanahiraku* (flowers bloom)."
- 1956 ● The Paris Exhibition was held in the Nihonbashi Main Store.
- 1957 ● The Ikebukuro Store opened.
- 1958 ● The second phase of renovation and extension work on the Nihonbashi Main Store was completed. The scale of the store became the largest in Japan.
- 1960 ● The Statue of a Celestial Nymph (Sincerity) was placed in the central hall of the Nihonbashi Main Store.
- 1971 ● Paris Mitsukoshi, the first store in a foreign country, opened.
- 1973 ● The Hiroshima and Yokohama Stores opened.
- 1980 ● The Kurashiki Store opened.
- 1982 ● The Board of Directors decided on the dismissal of then President Okada.
  - Orland Mitsukoshi at Disney World in Florida opened.
- 1983 ● A new TV shopping program, "Ladies 4," started.
- 1986 ● The Prince of Wales, Charles, and the late Princess Diana visited the Nihonbashi Main Store.
- 1988 ● The Mitsukoshi Ball Marking the 100th Anniversary of Western-style Clothes was held.

- 1991 ● The first store of Shin Kong Mitsukoshi opened in Taipei.
- 1992 ● Mitsukoshi Étoile opened in Paris.
- 1994 ● The Yebisu Store opened as the main commercial facility of Yebisu Garden Place.
- 1995 ● The old building of the Osaka Store, which was affected by the Great Hanshin Earthquake, was demolished.
- 1996 ● The Mitsukoshi Card program started.
  - Mitsukoshi's website was launched.
- 1997 ● The Fukuoka Store opened.
- 1998 ● To achieve "the customer comes first" principle, the Operations Headquarters structure was introduced.
- 1999 ● "Product ideas" were sought from the general public and the project drew a great response.
  - An early retirement compensation program was introduced.
  - The first strategic *hiraba* section, Wonderful Life, opened in the Ikebukuro Store. (*Hiraba* is a section where products of various brands and manufacturers are sold together.)
- 2000 ● Sales celebrating the victory of the Yomiuri Giants professional baseball team were held in all stores for the first time.
  - The Tama Center Store opened.
- 2001 ● The Kichijoji Store opened.
- 2002 ● Taneo Nakamura was appointed president.
  - Sapporo Alta and Glass Square in the Yebisu Store opened.
- 2003 ● A midterm five-year plan was developed and announced.
  - The five companies of Mitsukoshi, Nagoya Mitsukoshi, Chiba Mitsukoshi, Kagoshima Mitsukoshi and Fukuoka Mitsukoshi were consolidated into the new Mitsukoshi company.
- 2004 ● Celebrating the 100th anniversary, various events were held in each store.
  - The new annex building was completed and the new Nihonbashi Main Store celebrated its grand opening.
- 2005 ● The Lachic specialty store building in Nagoya opened. The Shinjuku Store changed its business style and opened as Shinjuku Mitsukoshi ALCOTT.